

## **Rings, diplomas and eloquent speeches by Jancys\_Blue\_Bayou**

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** F/M, Fluff, Future Fic, Romance

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eleven (Stranger Things), Holly Wheeler, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Karen Wheeler, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Ted Wheeler, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2018-02-07

**Updated:** 2018-02-07

**Packaged:** 2022-04-20 16:40:39

**Rating:** General Audiences

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 1,924

**Publisher:** [archiveofourown.org](https://archiveofourown.org)

**Summary:**

This has to be one of the most stressful days of her life. Yes, there's of course that day she crawled into another dimension. And that day they sat fire to a monster. And that day they exorcised an even worse monster out of her boyfriend's little brother. But college graduation day is a strong fourth on the list already and they haven't even left the apartment yet.

## **Rings, diplomas and eloquent speeches**

### **Author's Note:**

Jancy fanfic week is here! For February 7th the prompt was "Anything goes", so this is from an anon prompt on tumblr: "Jonathan proposing to Nancy on the day they graduate college (in NYC obvs)". Big thanks to @jancystrangerstuff on Tumblr who helped with research.

This has to be one of the most stressful days of her life. Yes, there's of course that day she crawled into another dimension. And that day they sat fire to a monster. And that day they exorcised an even worse monster out of her boyfriend's little brother. But college graduation day is a strong fourth on the list already and they haven't even left the apartment yet. But her mom has already called twice, her family arrived yesterday evening and stayed the night in a hotel nearby. The Byers slash Hopper clan spent the night in their living room so it's quite cramped for the moment. She accidentally stepped on Will a bit when she went to the bathroom earlier. And she's trying to not freakout about her speech. And trying to work out the kinks of her plan to not miss Jonathan's graduation ceremony either. All the while getting dressed and ready for the day. She already hates the stupid gown, who came up with that tradition anyway?

There's also way to many people in the bathroom, she and Jonathan both trying to get ready and Joyce helping her with her hair. Will, El and Hopper sits in the kitchen. She resolves to shove Jonathan out into the hall, he can just aswell use the mirror hanging on the wall there.

"You don't have to come to my ceremony, I'm just sayin'," he calls out from the hall.

"But you're coming to mine!" She shouts back while putting on the

ear rings he gave her for her last birthday.

"That's different, you're the valedictorian, I'm not missing your speech!"

"Well I'm not missing you!" She shoots back. "Plus if you can make it over to yours in time after mine so can I."

"You're gonna get held up by your professors and everyone else," he notes. "I'll have to clear out of there as soon as you've gotten your diploma to make it to mine in time. Plus you're in heels."

"I'll take them off and use as weapons to clear a path. Plus it's not that far."

"It's not close. And they might not even let you in."

"I'm super-fast and I can talk my way into any room!"

"Fine, I'll give you that but--"

"Jonathan have you ever won an argument with her?" Will interrupts.

"We're not arguing!" She calls.

"Yes you are," El points out.

"Just a little!" She grants.

"I'm not winning this, am I?" Jonathan asks.

"Do you ever?" She teases.

"We'll save you a seat, honey," Joyce says as she puts the finishing touches on her.

"Thanks."

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Nancy Wheeler doesn't do things half-assed and she certainly doesn't graduate college half-assed. So she makes sure to talk to and say goodbye to professors and classmates she might never see again beforehand, talks with those of her classmates she knows she'll see again because they're real friends. She sits and listens attentively to the other speeches. She gets up on stage when they call her name and delivers her valedictorian speech. She looks over to Jonathan with her family near the back while she's giving it. He lowers his camera and smiles. Then she can see him mouthing along her words because he's just that much of a doofus who does things like that because she of course tried out all eight drafts of her speech on him for a second opinion she truly values. The speech goes well, she felt it and both Laurie and Alex whisper that it was great when she sits back down between them. She sits and waits for her name to be called again and thinks of Jonathan's bad luck that she's a W. Finally it's her turn and she gets up again. She can hear Mike whooping and Jonathan taking more photos as she waves to them.

Jonathan's right of course, she does get held up because the goddamn Principal starts talking to her and she can't just blow him off straight away especially when he's praising her and mentioning contacts at the Times. Eventually she does manage to nicely peel away. She distributes hugs and goodbyes on her way out. And she does make it in time because *she does not do things half-assed*. She sits down in between Joyce and El just in time for Jonathan's class ceremony. Will's got Jonathan's camera now. Joyce already looks almost teary-eyed and mumbles with immense pride in her voice about Jonathan being the first in her whole family to graduate from college. Since NYU has so many classes they have to get through, they just hand one ceremonial diploma to each class as a whole, the real one Jonathan will get later in the mail. She's incredulous when they call out for the class representative Jonathan Byers to please come to the stage and collect it on behalf of the class.

"He didn't tell me he was the representative!" She shouts to Joyce

while they all get out of their seats. Will's snapping off pictures and they all cheer maybe louder than what's the norm but they don't care. Jonathan looks humbled and bit embarrassed but waves to them.

When it's all over she and Joyce lead them in pushing their way through the crowd to get to Jonathan (Joyce and Hopper gave El strict *no powers today* orders this morning). She makes it over to him first, he's standing talking with his classmates.

"You didn't tell me you were class representative!" She yells at him while throwing her arms around him, planting a quick kiss on his lips and hugging him tight.

"It's not a big deal, Ms. Valedictorian," he answers, holding her close.

"You're an idiot, yes it is," she grins and smacks him on the arm to his classmates amusement.

"Honey I'm so proud of you!" Joyce cuts in and hugs her son. Will, El and Hopper follows.

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They mingle for a bit before they have to leave to meet up with her family for dinner. Her mom told her to pick any restaurant in the city, their treat. So she, in consultation with Jonathan, picked the Chinese restaurant around the corner from their apartment, partly because the food's good and the owners are really sweet, partly to screw just a little bit with her dad who she knew expected really fancy fine dining. Plus it gives them a chance to stop by the apartment to get out of the damn robes – seriously who thought it was a good idea to have everyone in thick black robes, it's the end of

May and scorching outside. She throws on a dress and fixes her hair.

"Come on, let's go!" She calls out, standing in the hall. He's taking uncharacteristically long in their bedroom, she can hear him rummaging around in the closet. For the first time in four years she's ready before him. She marches back to the bedroom. "What's taking so long?" She asks as she opens the door.

He's standing in front of the mirror, quickly turning and putting his hands behind his back when she bursts in. Is she crazy or was he talking to himself when she came in? He looks like a deer caught in headlights.

"But you are dressed, come on what's taking so long?" She asks, confused.

"Nothing," he replies quickly.

She raises her eyebrows at him, not buying it. He's acting way too weird.

"What's going on?" She demands.

"Nothing."

"Were you just talking to yourself?"

"No I wasn't," he replies way to quickly.

"Yes you were. Come on, spill. We gotta get to dinner but I'm not sitting through that wondering about this the whole night."

He has that look about him that he gets when he's thinking through something. Then he seems to makes his mind up.

"Fine, okay. I was just... thinking about uh, it's crazy, that we made

it. Graduated, I mean. I can't believe it," he starts.

"I know, me neither," she agrees, stepping towards him.

"I couldn't have done it without you."

"Me neither."

"And I'm so proud of you. You're gonna be the best reporter in the world."

"Well you're already the best photographer in the world."

"Not true."

"Yes it is, I think so," she's steadfast. He smiles at that.

"Fine, okay. Anyway I'm really excited about the future."

"Me too," she agrees again. He takes a quick breath then the words just pour out of him.

"And uh, I've been thinking about everything. You know, the past, and now and the future, as mentioned, and... us. You're the best person in the whole world, ever, no contest even, you're the smartest and strongest and kindest and funniest and most beautiful and I love you like, more than you will ever know and I can't imagine my life without you so... will you marry me?"

He reveals a small box that he'd been hiding behind his back the whole time. Inside is a simple but beautiful ring. She's momentarily stunned.

"Uh, I mean, will you marry me?" He repeats and starts to get down on one knee and she can't believe him.

"Of course you idiot!" She answers and throws herself at him so he quickly catches her and stands up fully. She plants a big kiss on his lips before pressing her face into the crook of his neck, her hands are around his neck and he holds her up as her feet dangle in the air. She can feel his warm breath against her as he lets out a deep exhale and holds her even closer before he puts her down.

"Sure?" He asks with the widest grin she's ever seen on him.

"Yes!" She answers and he slides the ring on her finger.

She kisses him again.

"I love you so much, way more than you'll ever know too," she tells him, echoing his words. "And I can't wait for the future. With you. Together."

"Together," he repeats.

"We can do anything."

"Everything."

She kisses him over and over again. He reciprocates time and time again.

"We have to go, everyone's waiting," he eventually says between kisses. By this time she's got him up against the wall.

"Ugh, you're right," she sighs. She loves her family. And his family. Wait, is it *their* family now maybe? But oh how she'd love some more time with just him right now.

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"How long have you planned this?" She asks as they make their way out of the building, sliding deep into his side while they stride down the sidewalk.

"I got the ring a few months ago, I figured it would be romantic to ask on Graduation day."

"It was."

"I was going to do it more... better, eloquent, y'know."



"What were you doing when I came in?"

"Practicing. I was thinking I'd do it later tonight, after dinner. But then the world's best reporter trapped me with her unrelenting questioning," he smirks.

"Aw, sorry about that. Just so you know it was good, very eloquent."

"I don't know I-"

"Would you just take the valedictorian of Columbia School of Journalism's Class of 1989's word for it?" She jokes.

"Fine," he chuckles.

They can see all their family members standing outside the restaurant, waiting.

"Finally," a frustrated Holly sighs.

"We got engaged," she just blurts out straightaway, showing the ring on her finger. Everyone stares at them, shocked by the look of it. Eventually Mike is the one to break the silence.

"I thought you were just going to go change your clothes?"